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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79

Issue #42
August 6, 1976

MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES.....At the Cabinet meeting on July 23, President Ford discussed managerial objectives and management priorities for the next two years. As a follow-up to this meeting, OMB has prepared a list of 20 specific actions the President expects each agency to take. These actions fall into 5 categories:

- ...Decision making and departmental organization.
- ...Evaluation of current programs.
- ...Reduction of the burden of Federal reporting and regulations.
- ...Contracting out and holding down overhead costs.
- ...Personnel management.

There will be more discussion of this subject at our next meeting.

AGRICULTURAL SERVICE CENTERS.....USDA State Administrative Committees report that approximately 450 of a planned 1100 service centers are now operational. ✓
Criteria for "operational" status requires that, within a given center, interagency personnel interchange agreements be established; a center administrative committee be established and operational; a common main entrance and reception area be in use; a cooperative agreement for sharing costs be signed; provision be made for sharing of equipment; a rotary telephone system be installed; and that all information be shared among the colocated agencies.

Over 50% of the designated centers have, or plan to use, an "open space" design that reduce costs and facilitates the sharing of workload and equipment.

Strategy for implementation of the service center program is being evaluated to ensure the validity of present guidelines and objectives. OA is helping to identify problem areas where much work remains to be done.

Significant operational changes have occurred where State Administrative Committees have conscientiously worked at establishing quality service centers. In several states, space costs have already been reduced. (Contact: Dick Hadsell, 00, ext. 73152).

PARKING IN USDA COURTS.....Because of frequent reported violations and abuses, the Department is stepping up its enforcement of parking rules and regulations. This is intended to assure that "parking privileges" can be enjoyed by those so entitled and parking violators found and fined. To do otherwise, results in violators using assigned spaces while the authorized employee is denied use of his parking privilege. Drivers are asked not to unload or pickup carpool members on the side-walks, ramps, and aisles or make left hand turns, from 4-6:30 p.m., from any South Building Court. Parking permits will be revoked if regulations are not observed. (Contact: Al Cauley, 00, ext. 72815).

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JEFFERSON AUDITORIUM.....00 has reviewed their records on the use of the Jefferson Auditorium during non-working hours and found that no request for use has been received during the past two years. While there is no way to tell what the impact of returning the Auditorium to GSA control would be, there is no reason to believe there would be a greater number of requests for off-hours use. OI has suggested that the following conditions be placed on off-hours use:

- ...Using groups assume all responsibility and cost.
- ...People using the Auditorium during off-hours be provided with rules for use of the building.
- ...Security and other necessary arrangements be confirmed in writing five days prior to the event.
- ...Guards be posted in adjacent hallways and by the 5th and 6th wing restrooms.

It is anticipated that the impact of off-hours use will be negligible and manageable. Therefore, in accordance with the decision reached by the Management Council, control of the Auditorium will be turned over to GSA. (Contact: Bill Hamilton, 00, ext. 73141).

✓ NEW OMB CIRCULARS ISSUED.....Two new OMB Circulars (No. A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations and No. A-111, Jointly Funded Assistance to State and Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations) were published in the Federal Register on Friday, July 30, 1976. Both of these Circulars will require Departmental implementation--A-110 by January 1, 1977, and A-111 within 90 days of the date of issuance.

OMB has identified 14 USDA programs that will be subject to Circular No. A-110. We have not yet seen the preliminary list. Initially, only certain FmHA and FS programs are considered suitable for jointly funded projects under Circular No. A-111; however, SCS is likely to be asked to designate the RC&D program as also being suitable for jointly funded projects. (Contact: Don Manns, 00, ext. 77527 for A-110 and Jack Cox, RDS, ext. 72845 for A-111).

USDA MAIL AND MESSENGER SERVICE.....The Office of Operations is working with USDA agencies to reduce mail costs and improve mail and messenger service. Major efforts will be to:

- ...Coordinate outside messenger service in the D.C. metropolitan area.
- ...Establish standard mail delivery times in the D.C. metropolitan area.
- ...Institute a program for reducing USDA postage costs through reductions in mail use, quantity, and class.
- ...Study the need to centralize vs. decentralize mail services within the HQ complex.

Results will be presented to the Management Council for approval with the item on outside messenger service to be presented this month. (Contact: Jerry Pepper, 00, ext. 78393).

ST. LOUIS COMPUTER CENTER GAO AUDIT.....A meeting was held with GAO on Friday, July 30, to discuss the draft GAO report on the SLCC upgrade. In addition to GAO, attendees included ADS, FmHA, and OA. The USDA comments and position on each of the major points within the report were discussed. GAO indicated that they would consider our comments and meet with us after their review. (Contact: H. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275).

FIELD INSTALLATION ADP REQUIREMENTS (FIAR).....ADS is developing a plan of action which will incorporate the recommendations of the FIAR Task Force encouraging the use of sharing ADP resources at the field office level, particularly in an Agricultural Service Center environment. (Contact: H. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275).

UNIVAC 1100/42 DELIVERED TO FORT COLLINS COMPUTER CENTER.....On July 25, UNIVAC delivered an 1100/42 computer to the Fort Collins Computer Center as a replacement for the present 1108. Estimated operational date for this new system is September 7. (Contact: Ray Long, ADS, ext. 74789).

ACQUISITION OF MINI-COMPUTERS.....ADS is working on a Departmental policy statement regarding mini-computers, and a Departmental project regarding distributed processing. In conjunction with the Resource Exchange Program, ADS will develop guidelines for utilization of mini-computers in USDA. (Contact: Bob Head, ADS, ext. 77543).

VIDEO AUDIO INSTRUCTION (VAI).....ADS has entered into a cooperative agreement for VAI with the USDA Graduate School. Under this agreement, the Graduate School and ADS will jointly establish a VAI library with an updating feature for current courses, and the Graduate School will administer training and reports for ADS. This will reduce the administrative overhead and space requirements ADS would otherwise need to maintain this program, enabling the Graduate School to become more involved in VAI. Other USDA agencies are invited to participate. (Contact: Ray Long, ADS, ext. 74789).

PRIOR APPROVALS.....Though further improvement needs to be realized, the Office of Personnel has continued to reduce the average processing time for personnel actions at GS-14 and above.

| <u>FISCAL YEAR</u> | <u>ACTIONS</u> | <u>TIME (Calendar days)</u> |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1973 | 1038 | 33.1 |
| 1974 | 1216 | 20.1 |
| 1975 | 1031 | 14.9 |
| 1976 | 918 | 13.6 |

(Contact: Phyllis Mowery, OP, ext. 77131)


NEW DIRECTOR FOR OEO.....James Frazier has been appointed Director, OEO, effective July 26. Jim previously served as Director, Office of Civil Rights, DOT. Miles Washington, Acting Director, OEO, resigned on July 17.

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS.....Formal discrimination complaints in FY 76 totaled 163, compared to 102 in FY 75. Investigations made in conjunction with the formal discrimination process cost USDA an average of \$5200 per complaint. A review of these formal complaints indicates that many of these should have been resolved at the agency level. It is the responsibility of managers to improve the procedures and methods used to resolve discrimination complaints. (Contact: Gloria Torres, OP, ext. 72635).

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS.....The Assistant Secretary for Administration met with the Advisory Committee on Civil Rights on July 27, to discuss the Department's position on the 23 recommendations made in the Committee's report of January 1976, to the Secretary. The Secretary participated in this meeting for a short time. A copy of the report, and the Department's response, has already been furnished to agencies. (Contact: J. Fred King, OEO, ext. 77117).

FY 78 BUDGET ESTIMATES AND WORKING CAPITAL FUND.....The FY 78 budget estimates are being developed and reviewed. The Assistant Secretary for Administration is meeting with each Staff Director to review their FY 78 budget. As soon as these estimates are firm, they will be discussed with the Management Council. (Contact: Bob Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176).

MEETING WITH GSA ADMINISTRATOR.....The Assistant Secretary for Administration met with Jack Eckerd on July 27, to discuss some items of concern to USDA. The major topics of discussion were ADP problems, primarily procurement. Also covered was the sampling technique used by GSA to bill USDA for FTS calls. A USDA-GSA task force is being established to review discrepancies in the USDA telephone inventory. GSA has been cooperative in working with the Department in solving problems of mutual interest.

 WORD PROCESSING MANAGEMENT GUIDE.....A draft Word Processing Management Guide has been distributed for review and comment to agency Deputy Administrators for Management and Staff Office Directors. This guide recommends procedures and levels of detail to be used in establishing word processing programs. Comments on this guide should be made by August 31. (Contact: Henry Arnold, OMF, ext. 75725).

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT AND PRIVACY ACT COURSE.....The USDA Graduate School will offer a 10 week course on the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act this Fall. The course will be on Wednesday evenings, from 6 to 8, with the first class on September 29. Tuition is \$38 and the instructor will be Doug Wood, OGC. (Contact: Doug Wood, OGC, ext. 77350).